

Appl. No. 09/840370

REMARKS

The following remarks are in response to the Office Action mailed on February 28, 2003. Upon entrance of the amendments above, Claims 1-6 remain pending in this application.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-6 and claim 22 under 35 USC § 112. The Examiner rejected claims 1-6 and claim 22 under 35 USC § 102. The Examiner rejected claim 22 under 35 USC § 103. Response is hereby made to these rejection.

Claim 22 has been cancelled, therefore the response will be directed to the rejection of claims 1-6.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC § 112 as vague and indefinite because there was no distinction between the first and second modules. Specifically, the Examiner noted that the claim did not state if they performed the same or different functions.

The first and second modules are clearly distinguishable by their connections. The first module is connected to the controller, and provides an output to the second module. The second module receives the output of the first module. Thus, even if the modules are identical but for the connections, they are still distinguishable.

Moreover, the specification describes modular machine where various modules can perform different or the same functions. Claim 1 reflects that by not specifying the function of each module. A machine that has the first and second modules performing the same function is within the scope of the invention, as is a machine where the first and second modules perform different functions. There is nothing indefinite about the claim, it clearly includes either arrangement.

Accordingly, the indefiniteness rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn.

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Claim 2 was similarly rejected under 35 USC § 112 as vague and indefinite because there was no distinction between the first, second and third modules. Specifically, the Examiner noted that the claim did not state if they performed the same or different functions.

The first three modules are clearly distinguishable by their connections. The first module is connected to the controller, and provides an output to the second module. The second module receives the output of the first module and provides an output to the third module. The third module receives the output from the second module. Thus, even if the modules are identical but for the connections, they are still distinguishable.

Moreover, the specification describes modular machine where various modules can perform different or the same functions. Claim 2 reflects that by not specifying the function of each module. A machine that has the three modules performing the same function is within the scope of the invention, as is a machine where the three modules perform different functions. There is nothing indefinite about the claim, it clearly includes either arrangement.

Accordingly, the indefiniteness rejection of claim 2 should be withdrawn.

Claim 3 was similarly rejected under 35 USC § 112 as vague and indefinite because there was no distinction between the second and third modules. Specifically, the Examiner noted that the claim did not state if they performed the same or different functions.

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The second and third modules are clearly distinguishable by their connections. The second module receives the output of the first module and provides an output to the third module. The third module receives the output from the second module. Thus, even if the modules are identical but for the connections, they are still distinguishable.

Moreover, the specification describes modular machine where various modules can perform different or the same functions. Claim 3 reflects that by not specifying the function of the second and third modules. A machine that has them performing the same function is within the scope of the invention, as is a machine where they perform different functions. There is nothing indefinite about the claim, it clearly includes either arrangement.

Accordingly, the indefiniteness rejection of claim 3 should be withdrawn.

Claim 6 was rejected because its dependency was unclear. It has been amended to depend from claim 1.

Claims 1-6 were rejected as being anticipated by Todd et al. (6247923). The Examiner held that Todd showed "each station is capable of interfacing with previous or subsequent sections as need such that the controller 15 is operatively connected to each ...", and cited Col 3, lines 13-34.

Applicants respectfully submit that Todd is the sort of modular machine described in the background of the present application (page 2, line 33 - page 3, line 5) where each section is directly connected to a controller. Specifically, while Col. 3, line 14, states the sections may interface with one another, it does not state the interface includes passing any control, power, or operating signals from section to section. Interfacing

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includes as little as passing the web from one section to another, as is well known in the prior art.

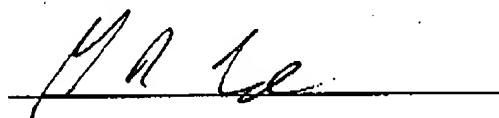
Moreover, Figure 4 of Todd shows the connection between the controller 14 and the various sections is indeed that of the prior art. Controller 15 includes direct connections to each of the sections or modules -- there is no passing of parameters from one section to the next.

Claim 1, conversely, requires an operating parameter (movement instructions, timing information, speed, distance, processes needed, temperature of seals, dwell time, etc.) be passed from the first module to the second module. This is clearly not shown in Todd. The only thing passing from one section (200, 202, 204) to another is the film.

Thus, claim 1, and claim 2-5 which depend therefrom, should be allowed since the prior art does not show the passing of operating parameters from one section to the next.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the application should be allowed. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned if it will aid in the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully Submitted

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